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SUBJECT: Guangdong's Migrant Worker NPC Delegate: Looking for
On-the-Job Training

REF: Guangzhou 27

11. (U) Social security, education for migrant workers' children and the welfare of migrant workers in general are critical issues for South China's workers, according to Guangdong's migrant worker representative to the National People's Congress (NPC) Hu Xiaoyan. Hu, who was not among the original six migrant workers elected to the Guangdong People's Congress (reftel), told the Consul General February 28 that she would "try [her] best" to represent Guangdong's 30 million migrant laborers and that she appreciated the trust placed in her by the government.

"Things Always Change Faster than You Plan"

12. (U) With only a short period of training in Zhuhai and no staff to help her prepare for the NPC in Beijing, Hu understandably appeared somewhat overwhelmed by her new assignment. Hu said she did not have a plan for her five-year term because "things always change faster than you plan," though she did intend to "work closely" with the other two NPC migrant delegates (from Shanghai and Chongqing, according to Xinhua) to promote migrant workers' equities. Throughout the meeting, Hu generally resorted to talking points in response to substantive questions.

13. (U) Comment: The appointment of Hu and two other migrant worker representatives to the NPC is a start -- perhaps more cosmetic than substantive -- in addressing the needs of China's floating labor population. Although government media have celebrated the way she "often stays up late to collect requests and suggestions of fellow migrant workers," Hu told us that as of late February no workers from her company had approached her to discuss issues for representation. Indeed, though Hu said she welcomed input from workers by phone, email, letter, or through the trade union, the extent of actual exchange was unclear.

Biographical Data

14. (U) Hu Xiaoyan, 34, hails from Guang'an, Sichuan Province, (Deng Xiaoping's hometown and perhaps a symbolic reason for her selection) where she worked as a farmer before coming to Guangdong Province in 11998. Although Hu only has a middle-school education, she has proven herself an able worker and currently serves as a Deputy Supervisor at the Xin Ming Zhu (New Pearl) Ceramic Industrial Company, located in Foshan, where she was named one of the city's "Top Ten Migrant Workers" in 2006. Hu's husband, Liu Jiaming, also works at the Xin Ming Zhu Company. The two have twin daughters who live in Guang'an.

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